have chosen industry and renown, or those others who have concentrated on hard living and the enjoyment of the pleasures of life, they all seem so ebullient, so much Lower Burman and not of the court of Mandalay.

My grandfather was a pleader by profession, but by reputation much more—he was a classical scholar, famed for his fiery temper, his forthrightness and the stern discipline he imposed on all his children, grandchildren, dependents and anyone else who was given into his charge. He was also known for sudden progressive and even radical courses of action while expressing most reactionary views. My mother says he was a great man. My aunts loved to tell of his mental prowess, of how he never learnt English, never spoke it, but always as he did his pleading in court he could understand everything that was said around him in English; my mother also told us of how beautiful he looked on a horse; and when he was playing *chinlon*, which is a light cane ball to be kept in the air by tossing with legs, shoulders or any part of one's body that agility can devise, his short strong body, bare except for the longyi tucked about his loins, with tattoo marks in a blue-ringed pattern from waist to knee, and his long thick hair in a knot on the crown of his head, all looked more fair, more *manly* than the cropped hair, the shoes and socks and collars of the present junior generation.

Grandfather started his family in a village just outside Moulmein, but a fire burnt down the house when my mother was still very young, and he decided to bring his family to Thaton and set up a practice there. He chose a site outside the town proper. It was then surrounded by muddy fields and, knowing Thaton at present with its 220 inches of rain a year, I can sympathize with my aunt Kyi-Kyi-Lon, who is said to have rolled herself on the ground with rage at beholding such a prospect.

The house which Grandfather built still stands today. There are not many houses left in Burma which reflect so well the type of comfort which a well-to-do family provided for in those days, or which have been built with so much regard to the customs of daily life and occasional festivities, and so little regard for appearance. Grandfather enclosed

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and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great mango and pipul trees and the lofty cocoa-nut and palmyra palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to work again as a penance. Then during the work there was the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write out maxims and prayers on his little parabaik with a clumsy pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered big pupils who could not manage to write their copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which lie in the sea round about Myinmo mountain; of the half-moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic punishments. Every now and again travelling necromancers and hmaw sayās would spend a night or two at the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies and odds and ends of food which good-natured neophytes would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and marvel. Sometimes there would be a sā-haw sayā, a kind of cyclic poet, who knew half the zats in the language by heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a tattooing sayā would come round and mark some particularly favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the school days long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as any European that there are no days so happy as the school days.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in the province, but even now we may say that, as an invari-

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CHAPTER V

TATTOOING

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WHATEVER his parents may think, the Burman youth considers the tattooing of his thighs quite as important a matter as his entry into a monastery. If he attains to the full dignity of humanity by becoming a shin, it is no less settled in his own mind that till he is tattooed in proper fashion there may be doubts as to his thorough manhood. Accordingly, very often at a tender age, varying with the spiritedness of his character, he begins to get figures tattooed on various parts of his thighs. When the operation is finished, the whole body from the waist, in a line with the navel, downwards to just beyond the knee-cap, is completely covered, the effect to the eye being not so much of a marking of the cuticle as of a skin-tight pair of *caleçons*, fitting better than the best glove ever made. The origin of the custom may or may not be the shameful reason assigned by foreign writers. No true Burman believes it. But in any case the tattooing looks very well on the olive skin, and I have heard English ladies admire it. The custom will probably never die out. There are, it is true, not a few puny Rangoonites, spiritless sons of the town, who do not get tattooed, but they are ashamed of it and take every opportunity of concealing their weakness. But there is not a single up-country man, not a solitary taw-tha, the sturdy inhabitants of the small towns and villages, who is not decorated with the dark blue tracery. They would as soon think of wearing a woman's skirt as of omitting to be tattooed, and they are strengthened in the feeling by the opinion of the girls themselves.

The operation is not by any means pleasant. In fact in

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304 885 places such as the tender inside parts of the thigh and at the joints of the knee, it needs more stoicism than most youths can command, to endure it without relieving the mind in speech. Therefore it is common to put the boy [276] under the influence of opium while it is being done, though some parents will not allow this, for cases have occurred where the youth has died of an over-dose. For the same reason it is very seldom that more than three or four figures are done at a time. The part swells up a good deal, and there is danger of fever; besides that a few days afterwards the itchiness which supervenes is almost as intolerable as the first tattooing, while if the skin is broken by scratching there is not only a nasty sore, but the figure is spoilt. You not uncommonly hear of cases where the whole surface was finished at one sitting, but you only hear of them because it is unusual, and because the youth is proud of it.

304 531 The instrument used is a pricker about two feet long, weighted at the top with a brass figure, sometimes plain, but in the case of good sayās, always carved more or less elaborately in the figure of a bird, a nat, or a bilu. The yat, or style part, is solid, with a round, sharp point, split up into four by long slits at right angles to each other, which serve to hold the colouring matter. This style is about four inches long and fits into a hollow pipe, which again joins it to the weighted end. Thus the length required for free work is gained without too great weight, except where it is wanted. The tattooer catches the pricker with his right hand, and guides the point with a rest formed by the forefinger and thumb of his left, the hand resting firmly on the person's body. The dye used is lampblack, the best being that obtained by the burning of sessamum oil, and this is mixed with water as it is wanted. Good sayās always sketch the outline of the figure roughly on the skin with an ordinary camel's-hair brush, and then the pattern is executed with a series of punctures close together, forming what afterwards fades into a rough line. Skilful men are very quick at it. I have had fifteen figures done in little over half an hour. But then, Sayā Chein is a celebrated man.

The figures tattooed are those of all kinds of animals, tigers, cats, monkeys, and elephants being the commonest,

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while nats, bilus, and compound animals called tiger-bilus are also frequent. Each representation is surrounded by a roughly oval tracery of a variety of letters of the alphabet, which form a curious and remarkably effective frame. Thus each animal has a setting of its own. Vacant spaces are filled up in a similar way, and the top and bottom are finished off with a scolloped line. Sometimes these letters are asserted to have a cabalistic meaning, but ordinarily no greater virtue is claimed for them than that of beauty. Mystic squares and ladder-step triangles of serious import are often added in vacant spaces, but all the more important and valid charms are reserved for other parts of the body and for special execution, usually too in vermilion. The old style, and that which prevails still in jungle districts, was to cover every available piece of skin with tracery, so that the figures became blurred and indistinct, and on a dark skin grown old were practically not visible without careful examination, which, considering the portion of the body, was embarrassing to both parties. The newer style, and that specially affected by those with a white skin, is to sacrifice mass of colour to distinctness of outline. The best sayās carry about sample-books with them containing clever drawings, from which the aspirant may select the patterns he likes best, and mark their relative positions before he takes the opium. But tigers, cats, monkeys, and bilus always predominate. To fill up space, and for greater certainty, the name of the animal is often added in the figure, after the style of juvenile art on slates, or with a piece of chalk on blank hoardings.

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The Shans tattoo even more extensively than the Burmans. The figures are carried down well over the calf of the leg and above the navel, while from the upper line tattooed rays run up to the chest and at the back, after the fashion of a rising sun, almost to the nape of the neck. Sometimes the retainers of the Sawbwas, or Shan chiefs, had every part of the body except the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet tattooed. Even the face was covered with the dark-blue markings. Mostly all the men who tattoo charms and cabalistic figures are Shans. They claim and are allowed a special skill in such matters, and as

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S B 305 751 563 they mutter spells and incomprehensible incantations over the "medicine," are looked up to with profound belief and a very considerable deal of awe.

B 304 531 The tattooing on the loins and legs is universal with all Burmans, and nothing more is ordinarily required; but there are very few who have not charms of some kind tattooed on the arms, back, chest, or even on the top of the head, which is shaved for the purpose. These figures are of all kinds—lizards, birds, mystic words and squares, rings, images of the Buddha, and sometimes merely a few scattered dots, the latter especially on the face, between the eyes, over the ears, or on the chin. The colouring matter is almost always vermilion, with drugs and solutions, according to requirement, mingled with it. The blue dye from the lampblack never disappears, but the red colour of the vermilion gradually fades away and vanishes. Nevertheless figures of this kind, more or less distinct, are to be found on Burmans of all ages, so great is the national superstition. Even the town youths, whose limbs are smooth and "unbreeched" as a girl's, are never without some charms of this kind, if it is only the a-nu se, which enables a man to gain the woman he loves. This "drug of tenderness" is composed of vermilion mixed with a variety of herbs and curious things, prominent among which is the bruised, dry skin of the taukte, the trout-spotted gekko, whose sonorous cry and fidelity to the house where he establishes himself and brings luck, are well known to all who have visited Burma or Siam. It is very sparingly used, a few round spots arranged in the shape of a triangle being of sufficient virtue to ensure the object aimed at. The commonest place for them is between the eyes, but occasionally the se sayā recommends the lips, or even the tongue, and his advice is always followed. This is the only tattooing which women ever have executed on them, and there are not many of them who have it done. The patient is usually a love-sick maiden who is afraid the object of her affection will escape from her, or a girl whom rolling years warn that she must be quick if she would not be condemned to remain an a-pyo heing, an old maid. Except in very desperate cases, however, they always manage to persuade the operator to place the charm on some part of the

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body where it will not be visible. If it is not effectual, there is always open to them the signal afforded by kindly national custom to maidens longing for a mate. They cut off the lappets of hair, the bya-bazan, hanging over the ears, and the significance is the same as the white heather of the language of flowers, "heart for sale." In Rangoon the tattooing of a woman has a special signification, not recognised elsewhere. It means that she wants an Englishman for a husband. Poor thing!

Another very universal kind of tattooing is that with a-hpi se. Almost every schoolboy in the country has a specimen of this on him, for does it not prevent him from feeling the pain when he is caned? No amount of falsified hopes in the experience of friends will persuade him that it may not be effectual in his case, and a flogging is often courted as an immediate test of its efficacy. Pride repels the inquiries of chums as to the results, but the experimenter is usually very well behaved for some time. In the case of older men the a-hpi se acts as a talisman against bullets, sword cuts, and ills of that kind. Allied to this are the thenat hpi, which soldiers and dacoits carry about with them. These are the horns of buffaloes and other animals, which may be plain, but are usually elaborately carved with figures according to fancy. They must be quite solid down to the root. A hollow or flaw of any kind deprives them of their virtue. While the man has such a talisman in his hands he cannot be killed. A monkey is a very favourite image to have carved in this way on a sword or dagger hilt, the reference being to the tale of the Ramayana. Of a similar nature are talismans which are especially used by soldiers and dacoits. These hkaung-beit-set are charmed or consecrated objects let into the flesh under the skin. They are of various kinds. Some are gold, silver, or lead; others curious pebbles, pieces of tortoise-shell, or bits of horn, all of them with incantations of mystic character written on them. Many famed dacoits have long rows and curves of them over the chest, showing in little knobs through the skin. When they get into English prisons, an energetic jailer has been known to cut them out, lest they should be pieces of gold or silver, or perhaps precious stones, with which the turnkeys

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might be bribed. The usual result is to break the robber's spirit. Once the continuity is interrupted the consecration is gone. More peaceable people wear necklaces or bracelets of such talismans in the belief that they are thus proof against malignant witches and necromancers. Most Englishmen in Burma, who are on friendly terms with the people, have been asked to test the virtue of such a charm, by firing at it tied up in a handkerchief. If the incantation is valid the handkerchief will be unharmed, though the muzzle of the pistol be held up to it. In such a case the pistol will burst.

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Another kind of tattooing is the mwe se, which guards against danger from snake bite. Similarly the a-kwè a-ka, the shielding, or defending drug, renders harmless the spells of wizards and geomancers, and keeps far away evil spirits of every kind. But the most hideous and weird of the superstitions about tattooing is that connected with the a-kyan se. There are but very few sayās who are acquainted with the necessary drugs and incantations, and fewer people still who have the courage to submit to the operation, for many men are pointed out whose minds have given way under the gruesome process, and who wander about graveyards, gnashing their teeth and fumbling about for human bones to gnaw and mouth. And no wonder, for some tattooers make them chew the raw flesh of a man who has been hanged, while the figure is being tattooed on the breast. Those who go through the operation are called Baw-di-tha-da. Some become Baw-di-tha-da without knowing it, and without the sickening necessity of mumbling human flesh like a ghoul. I knew an instance in a monastery. The patient was a boarder about fourteen years of age. A Shan tattooer wandering about the country spent a couple of nights in the kyaung, and the boy, attracted by the fellow's eerie tales, managed to save up a good many titbits for him from the food going in the monastery. Out of gratitude, and having nothing better to give him, for he was very poor and homeless, the sayā tattooed on the lad a figure with singular drugs, muttering queer phrases the while. Then he went away saying no more than that it would make the boy very strong. In about a month's time the boarder displayed unmistakable signs of being a Baw-di-tha-da. He

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leapt enormous heights in the air, jumped about and ran at random, carried with the utmost ease things which no one else could move. The abbot locked him up in a sadaik, the box in which the palm-leaf manuscripts were kept; he got out without injuring the lock in any way, sprang on to the roof of the monastery, forty feet high, and turned a somersault to the ground without hurting himself in the least. He had been a boy of very soft, easy temper, and now he became fiery and uncertain, and with his vast strength, very dangerous. He only calmed down when a monk preached the law to him. He was constantly doing marvellous things; one day he walked across the river in front of the monastery, holding a monk's ôk, or food vessel, in his hands. The depth of the water was over six fathoms, but it did not reach higher than his waist. On another occasion a tree which was being cut down fell on him. He sank into the ground and came forth quite uninjured. After some years his parents took him to Magwe in Upper Burma. There he fell into bad courses and became a dacoit. This was terrible for his family in a special way, because in native territory if they cannot catch the dacoit [681] they seize all his friends and relations and put them in jail till they can get hold of the real culprit, and no one can lay hands on a Baw-di-tha-da. At last, however, he was restored to his right mind. A holy ascetic came across him, soothed him with the payeit gyi, and then with a rusty nail and [792] sacred medicines, tattooed out the figure put on with such lamentable results by the Shan sayā. The quondam Baw-di-tha-da is now a staid and respected broker in the employ of one of the best-known English rice firms in Rangoon. He was fortunate; most Baw-di-tha-das have to be killed in their sleep.

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But though Baw-di-tha-das are very rare, charmed tattooing is not, and there are some fast young men who seem almost to make picture galleries of themselves with emblems and patterns all over their chests, arms, backs, and the ·lves of their legs. The colour gradually dies away until ·t last nothing remains but the blue breeches. These really lc k well, and they last a man to his dying day.

The following recipes and formulæ to be repeated

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The following recipes and formulae to be repeated
304 789 during tattooing are taken from a Mandalay tattooer's book :—

For an a-nu se: "I was Kutha Min, I. At the time when Papawadi was my queen, when I routed the kings of all the seven countries who came suing for her hand. Right beautiful was she, fair as the malla flower when it perfumes the forest with its odours. I the great Kutha Yaza."

This is to be repeated seven times at various stages in the operation. Kutha Yaza is the hero of one of the 510 Zats, detailing the previous births of the Lord Buddha.

For an a-hpi se: "Steal gold from the pagodas, fine, bright gold. Refine it in the fire and repeat the magic words in the house, on the lonely path, before the lucky star, at the pagoda; repeat them a thousand times save one. Consecrate the water, draw the circle of the flying galôn. Put it under the left arm, under the right arm. No harm will befall thee, safe and invulnerable."

"A parrot tattooed on the arm will give great favour with princes."

"Take a length of bamboo or of rattan the size of a joint of the merchant's finger, and repeat, pressing your foot against the tha-bye tree, Nat-tha wa-pa, wa-pa nat-tha na. Repeat this seven times and put the joint in your mouth when you are in danger. There is no better the-nat hpi."

[826] The merchant's finger (let thugywè) is the third—that on which rings are worn. The forefinger is called let-hno. Hno means to hate, but whether this is the meaning or not —as it were "the finger of scorn"—I do not know.

"Repeat sa ba pa wa wa ba pa wa with the tooth of the wild boar in your palm, with the wild boar's ear as you know. Draw the circle with pure red gold. Draw in it a nagā; then draw sideways the figure of a flying lion. Write round it ôm gyu-lu gyu-lu thwa ha ya. Then carry rice, fresh water, betel, tobacco, and le'pet to the pagoda and heap them together. When you have repeated a thousand times the words of the encircling gāta (spell) put it below the skin. But be careful not to give it to the first man who asks for it. It is very powerful." This is another a-hpi se.

Certain stones called amadé, said to be found in the

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Certain stones called amadé, said to be found in the heads of birds, in trees, and in animals, are highly prized as amulets. They will guard from musket shots, or sword thrusts, from painful blows, or evil spirits. Hmaw sayās always have them. When they are placed on a child's face, or introduced into any one's blood, nat thwin thi, they introduce a spirit. The person so possessed falls into a trance, and may be questioned as to the doings of any other evil spirits in the neighbourhood.

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Letters, placed in the magic squares and triangular "in" are la-gyi, na-gyi, ka-gyi, ga-gyi (great *l*, great *n*, great *k*, and great *g*). Other very powerful s'ma, as these tattooed letters are called, are "round" sa, wa, la, and "bottom-indented" da. The arm is a favourite place for them.

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The belief of every Burman in the efficacy of these tattooed charms is practically ineradicable. In 1881, in Rangoon, a young man had the figure of the great Peguan byaing, the "paddy-bird," a species of egret, tattooed upon him. This was to be as efficacious in preserving him from drowning as a child's caul used to be considered by British sailors. When it was finished, he suggested that an immediate experiment should be made. Accordingly his hands and feet were tied, and he was tossed over the side of a boat into the river. The under-currents in the Rangoon river are very dangerous, and the poor fellow was never seen again. The tattooers, master and assistant, were brought up on a charge of murder, and convicted of manslaughter, but the great mass of the Burman population thought they were very hardly treated, and that the fact of an unlucky side-wind, some mischance in the calculation from the horoscope, the machinations of an evil-disposed person against the deceased, or something of that kind, which had caused the lamentable issue, ought never to have led to the conviction of the skilled sayās. That they were charlatans was never once hinted.

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CHAPTER IV

EAR-BORING

881 THE first great event in a Burmese girl's life is the nā-twin
304 mingala, the boring of her ears. She is not out of the doll stage till that happens. She may have toddled after her mother to the market with a basket of fruit on her head, long before the ear-boring, but that ceremony is as much an epoch to her as putting on the yellow robe, or getting his legs tattooed, is to her brother. Ever afterwards she will look upon every male as a possible lover. No more taking alternate whiffs at a big green cheroot with little Maung Po; no more teasing Po Shan to let her have a taste of those fine nettè mangoes his father has got down from Mandalay; no more dawdling about the streets by herself, watching the small boys playing with the round gôn nyin seeds, or having a hurried glimpse of the puppet play, while she is supposed to be at home looking after the house with her little brother. When she walks out now it will be with her mother, or an aunt, or married sister, as a chaperone; and if she goes to the play it will be in formal procession, and with all her finest clothes on. Nothing like getting the ears bored to set a girl thinking about the wave of the hair that falls down in lappets by her ears, or the best recipe for the fragrant straw-coloured thanaka, with which she tints her face and charms half the senses of the gallants. It even alters her walk. She sets about practising the coquettish sway of the body in walking, which is considered so attractive, and which a philosophical matter-of-fact Darwinian would probably declare was first of all due to an involuntary throwing out of the heel with each step to keep the folds of the dress

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modestly closed in front, and to prevent the dainty slipper, just covering her toes and no more, from slipping off the foot. However that may be, it is an accomplishment indispensable to a Burmese belle. She takes as much pains over it as she does with her jetty tresses. In a word, the nā-twin mingala transforms the girl into a woman, just as much as admission to a monastery makes the boy a man. It is her baptism, and is the distinctive mark of her race. Most of the men get their ears bored too, but the ceremony is not so solemn with them, and latterly is not so universal, at any rate not in the towns on the coast.

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The ceremony takes place at the age of twelve or thirteen, just when the girl has attained puberty in fact. Her sadā is submitted to a soothsayer, that a fortunate day and hour may be chosen, and that being fixed, a great feast is prepared, and all the friends of the family and the relations are invited. An invitation to an ear-boring feast is a very urgent matter. No one can refuse without a very good excuse, and serious business is often postponed to the demands of such a ceremony. Everybody comes early, and sits down in any place he can find round about the front part and sides of the room, the girl, with all her female relatives about her, reclining on a mat at the back. The bedin sayā stalks about gazing at a mysterious strip of palm-leaf, or apparently wrapped in deep thought. Beside him is the professional ear-borer. He carries the needles, which are almost always pure gold, and even in the case of the poorest, never of any baser metal than silver. Rich people very often have them set at the ends with precious stones. At last the soothsayer gives the sign that the favourable moment has arrived. The ear-borer moves up immediately and passes the needles through the lobe of the ear, sometimes using a cork as they do in England, but more often letting them pass between two of his fingers. The girl, who has been worked up into a high state of excitement and terror by all the preparations, usually struggles and shrieks as hard as she can, but the women round about hold her down, and the band of music in the street outside strikes up a rapid movement and drowns her lamentations, while all the visitors burst into a flood of talk

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and reminiscences of other ceremonies of the kind that they have witnessed. Usually the gold needle is bent round and left in the wound, but poor people sometimes pass a piece of string through and tie it. This is turned round and passed backwards and forwards daily till the sides heal, and then begins the process of enlarging the hole to receive the na-daung, a big tube an inch long and from half an inch to three-quarters in diameter. This takes a very long time, and is less pleasant even than the first boring. Some do it with a gold or thickly gilt metal plate, which is rolled up and passed through the hole. The elasticity of the metal makes it constantly tend to expand, and so the hole is gradually enlarged. A commoner method, however, is by introducing stems of the kaing, or elephant grass. As many of the little stems of the inner blade as will go through are passed in, and daily their number is added to until a considerable width is attained. When kaing grass is not available, little splints of the thekkè kyaung are made use of. This is the ordinary thatch of the poorer sort of houses, and almost universal in the country districts, but forbidden in the large towns on account of its inflammable character. Then, after a time, the nā-kat is brought into use. This is a curious ear-plug, big at both ends, and smaller in the middle, where the two parts screw into one another. The screw is passed through the lobe of the ear, and the other portion is then twisted on. These nā-kat are gradually increased in size, until at last the orifices are large enough to receive the na-daung, the regular ear-cylinders. These are of various make and material, the latter being formerly regulated by the sumptuary laws in independent territory. The royal family, both males and females, had them of gold, richly set with jewels, often a single large brilliant in front, or a diamond surrounded by a ring of emeralds, while the back was a cluster of rubies. The right to wear these was also extended to the higher ministers and their families. Others wear gold, plain hollow tubes, or with the ends filled up with delicate *repoussé* work. Those who cannot afford this content themselves with solid amber plugs, which, when they are without a flaw, are worth three or four pounds sterling apiece. Finally, the poor content themselves with

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sing, nor play, nor paint. It must never be forgotten that their civilization is relatively a thousand years behind ours. Accomplishments are part of the polish that a civilization gives, and this they have not yet reached. Accomplishments are also the means to fill up time otherwise unoccupied; but very few Burmese girls have any time on their hands. There is no leisured class, and there are very few girls who have not to help, in one way or another, at the upkeep of the household.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells of a young lady who played the banjo. He has been more fortunate than myself, for I have never heard of such a person. They have no accomplishments at all. Housekeeping they have not very much of. Houses are small, and households also are small; and there is very little furniture; and as the cooking is all the same, there is not much to learn in that way. I fear, too, that their houses could not compete as models of neatness with any other nation. Tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization. We now pride ourselves on our order; we forget how very recent an accomplishment it is. To them it will come with the other gifts of age, for it must never be forgotten that they are a very young people—only children, big children—learning very slowly the lessons of experience and knowledge.

When they are between eight and fourteen years of age the boys become monks for a time, as every boy must, and they have a great festival at their entrance into the monastery. Girls do not enter nunneries, but they, too, have a great feast in their honour. They have their ears bored. It is a

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304 561 562 festival for a girl of great importance, this ear-boring, and, according to the wealth of the parents, it is accompanied by pwès and other rejoicings.

A little girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper here in this town, had her ears bored the other day, and there were great rejoicings. There was a pwè open to all for three nights, and there were great quantities of food, and sweets, and many presents given away, and on the last night the river was illuminated. There was a boat anchored in mid-stream, and from this were launched myriads of tiny rafts, each with a little lamp on board. The lamps gleamed bright with golden light as they drifted on the bosom of the great water, a moving line of living fire. There were little boats, too, with the outlines marked with lamps, and there were pagodas and miniature houses all floating, floating down the river, till, in far distance by the promontory, the lamps flickered out one by one, and the river fell asleep again.

'There is only one great festival in a girl's life,' a woman told me. 'We try to make it as good as we can. Boys have many festivals, girls have but one. It is only just that it should be good.'

562 157 And so they grow up very quiet, very sedate, looking on the world about them with very clear eyes. It is strange, talking to Burmese girls, to see how much they know and understand of the world about them. It is to them no great mystery, full of unimaginable good and evil, but a world that they are learning to understand, and where good and evil are never unmixed. Men are to them neither angels nor devils, but just men, and so the world does not hold for them the disappointments, the disillusionings

of clothes. The old people take care to save the torn garments for use in wiping the hands after meals, for handling hot pots on the stove and the like.

There are three classes of clothing (1) working clothes (2) festive dress, and (3) religious dress. The working clothes consist of the cheaper and less ornate fabrics and are mainly of cotton. The men usually bind the longyi around the loins by looping the shirt in a band between the legs. Htamein (women's longyi) waist band is secured under the armpits when bathing.

While walking in the rain the longyis are also raised to prevent them from becoming wet. Festive dress involves the best which one has, usually silks and are worn on the Sabbath days and at special social occasions as the SHIN BYA and other ceremonies. Religious dress is worn constantly by Pongyis (orange robes), nuns (peach coloured) and frequently by old men (white) and old women (light chocolate coloured). On Sabbath days the particularly religious individuals of all ages, especially those belonging to Buddhist lay societies, wear religious dress.

The term LONGYI means "lower apparel" and is applied to both men's (PUSO) and women's (HTAMEIN). The men's festive longyi TAUNG-SHAY-PUSO (taung measurement- twenty-puso) worn frequently in the past and now reserved for special occasions was a double silk PUSO 8 yards long. A special method of securing this garment about the waist results in GABON ZA ("Sticking out piece") a fold which protrudes 6 or more inches in the midline - only, however, when the silk is crisp and stiff (new and/or finest heavy quality). This is regarded as a very manly garment. Two styles of APAW KINGYI (over jacket) men's jacket are worn. The "Peking" type meeting at the mid-line is most common. A "Cantonese" type buttons over like the women's jacket at the side.

Formerly every young man had tattooed thighs, extending in a solid band of decoration from a few inches above the knees to the hips. The motifs were frequently nat symbols. The main purpose was to display manliness and courage since the process of tattooing, done with a 3 pronged fork dipped in pigment was extremely painful.

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●304 The custom is dying out today; but, in the villages, the teen-age boy
562 frequently, on the encouragement of their family submit to the tattoo-
178 ing of a small area on the thigh. These decorations seen when the longyis are wrapped high were regarded as essential and those without them were openly criticized.

[751] A second type of tattooing consisting of potent symbols were, as still are, placed on the inner arm, back, or high forehead as a means of magical protection against harm. Snake, knife, cudgel and bullet proof motifs are common. Young girls frequently have the inner arm tattooed with such a charm.

838 Homo-sexuals are known as MEIN MA SHA ("woman-half") and are
826 recognised by their effeminate gestures, "pretty" locks and clothing. They frequently wear THANAKHA face powder, tie their longyis in a simple tucked-in fold, and wear jewelry like the women. They are rare in villages but have banded together into a society in Rangoon. They appear to be tolerated but are scorned.

It is believed that individuals known as MEIN-THE-PON-LAIN-MEIN-PON-LAIN ("Female sex- 2 sexes") exist . These persons are supposed to be alternately a man for one month, and a woman for the following
[775] month in a complete process of transformation. Both the MEIN MA SHA and these individuals result from illicit seduction activities in a previous existence - the MEIN MA SHA being the less sinful of the two.

792 The PONGYI dress consist of orange cotton cloth - one garment
291 being a longyi with a folded tie at the waist; the other a wide band
293 draped as a robe. When begging the PONGYIS have a special arrangement of the robe which wraps the left arm and covers the neck region. The nuns wear a robe garment over a long sleeved KINGYI jacket of the same colour. They are frequently seen with a scarf folded on the head. Both orders carry orange-cloth (lacquered) parasols on long bamboo shafts, a string of beads and large palm leaf fans. The Pongyis carry leather bags suspended on a shoulder strap for personal effects. PONGYI slippers have a square toe, are made of stiff leather with reinforced soles.

[887] Religious women (including old women) wear chocolate coloured HTAMEINS, KINGYIS and carry a PUNI (a narrow scarf 4 of 5 feet in

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553 which the family invites the people of the village. In the larger communities a written invitation may be sent, in which the name of the child is announced. The [431] feast occurs in the family house, to which the invited guests bring presents and where they may see the child. The only ritualized feature of this event is the washing of the child's hair, which is always done by an elderly person. This may occur, however, before the arrival of the guests.

Because of the significance and influence attributed to the personal name, it may be changed very readily and informally. If it is felt that ill fortune is in the offing, an announcement may be made in the village of change of one's name.

[551] Childhood nicknames as well as teknonymy are utilized by the Burmese, but not to the exclusion of use of the personal name.

Childhood. Burmese children are generally indulged and their existence is 857 more or less carefree and unencumbered by rigid discipline, apart from early 858 inculcation of respect for elders, until they are of educational age and considered capable of understanding the moral teachings of Buddhism. A male child is valued religiously, for at an early age he will be initiated into the monkhood, [851] remaining from a few days to several years, depending upon family circumstances and needs. The initiation of a son brings great religious merit to his parents.

In the Burmese village children are valued for the economic help they render. This will, of course, vary with family circumstances. But in the ordinary cultivator's family, sons and daughters help from the age of about nine or ten years in tending cattle, getting firewood, and winnowing rice. Children are also looked upon as a kind of social insurance for old age.

[884] *Puberty and Adolescence.* Apart from modern legal ideas concerning the attainment of adulthood, the Burmese view is that one is adult when physiologically mature. Upon reaching pubescence boys as well as girls are referred to by a 881 term meaning "virgin." The connotation is that the individual has now entered a period of life in which the dangers of temptation are especially great and in which corresponding precautions are necessary.

A girl's first menstruation is believed to cleanse her system; frequently, such phenomena as eruption of the skin or sexually delinquent behavior preceding the first menstrual period are regarded as evidence that the "blood is trying to flow." [841] Although the idea of uncleanliness is associated with menstruation, there is no segregation of the girl or particular fear of contamination. So long as she conducts herself with propriety and modesty a girl is free to move in public at this time.

● 304 881 Ideally, the attainment of puberty is the time for the girl's ear-boring cere-

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mony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year. Since this is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, there is a tendency to hold a single ceremony, at which perhaps a pubescent girl, together with her younger sisters or cousins, will all have their ears bored. On the same occasion male children of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood.[5]

The girl initiate is dressed for the occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese court, and in addition she wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at her family's house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. The pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars and fans.

Courtship and Marriage. Young people in the villages find ample opportunities to assess each other's manners, physical appearance, and personality in the company of others, at feasts and various gatherings. If a young man and woman are together apart from the company of others it is assumed that sex relations are involved. In fact, such going together is spoken of as "getting married." The Burmese find it hard to conceive of a young unmarried couple associating on a purely friendly, non-sexual basis: such behavior would be regarded as contrary to nature. However, unchaperoned association is disapproved and does not occur very frequently.

Once a pair have decided they wish to marry, the boy will inform his parents of his desire. They will already know, especially in the smaller villages, of the standing of the girl's family and of her dowry potentialities; in fact, as soon as they have sensed their son's interest in a particular girl they will take steps to acquire this information. They will also ascertain whether acceptance by the girl's family is likely. In a small community the approach may be made directly by the boy's parents. In larger centers a female go-between is more likely to be employed. The boy's parents will be informed by the girl's family that the decision must await the outcome of consultation with an astrologer concerning the compatibility of the birth dates of the prospective bride and groom. If the marriage is found to be an auspicious one—which it will usually be found to be if the girl's parents desire the match—an affirmative answer will be relayed to the boy's parents. The latter will then call upon her parents and in the presence of elders, not necessarily related to either family, formally ask for the girl's hand.

5 Description of the boy's initiation ceremony is being reserved for a separate publication.

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next to a parent, with a life-long devotion.

Before or after the monastic novitiate, it is the custom for the Burman lads to have themselves tattooed from the waist to the knee (No. 152). Not to submit to this ordeal is to incur the reproach of cowardice. The tattooing is an intricate pattern of animals and tracery. Owing to the extent of surface involved, the process is most painful. It occupies days or weeks, according to the fortitude of the subject, who is drugged with opium for the occasion. The instrument has a handle weighted at the butt, and a long point of bronze, split like a ruling-pen. It is worked with great rapidity. The pigment is a kind of lamp-black of the consistence of ink. It shows bluish black through the brown skin. When a Burman tucks up his loin-cloth, as he always does for work or exercise (*kaddung-chaik*), he looks as if he had black knee-breeches. As plain as the contrast is to the eye, ordinary photographic plates fail to render it. In No. 153 it appears fully. On other parts of the body the men frequently have horoscopes and cabalistic diagrams tattooed with vermilion (*se-ni*, No. 162) for luck and bravado. The Shan practice of letting in gold and silver discs the size of two-penny pieces—beneath the skin—is sometimes imitated by Burmans as a charm against sword-cuts and bullets (*dâbyi*; *thenabbyi*). The Arakanese, who repudiate the custom of *Mgwin*, ascribe it to a Burman King, who endeavoured to disguise his leprosy in this way.

27. VILLAGE LAY SCHOOL.

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28. KITE-FLYING.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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151 THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

They are generally condoned. Burmans do not wait to make money in order to marry, but marry in order to make money. Girls marry from the age of about twenty, and men about twenty-five. The marriage is a quiet affair. A day is fixed, when the lad and his parents repair to the home of the girl, whither some of the elders of the village (*lúdyí*) have been invited for witness. The father of the lad addresses the parents of the girl in this wise: "Seeing that our children love each other, we pray you let your daughter be as our daughter and our son as your son" (*ekkaú*). The girl's parents express their pleasure and approval, and according to one usage, the couple thereupon join hands (*letlat*), which means marriage; but the joining-of-hands is as a rule figurative. After this the lad goes and fetches his bedding, curtain, and clothes and places them in the house in token of reception into the family. In conclusion, the parties and the witnesses eat pickled tea together. When one or both parties are strangers in the place, friends undertake the part of parents and the elders make inquiries as to blood-relationship and pre-existing ties. Kinship closer than first-cousin and the corresponding step-relationships are respected—except by royalty (p. 170). Sometimes marriages are of a more festive description (*mingala*). Astrologers are called in and company entertained as at the *náhaṅk mingala*. Other unions, again, are by mere mutual agreement, without formalities of any kind. By time-honoured custom the lads of the village claim the right to pelt the house of the new-married pair at night (*gè-pyit*), and it is usual to buy them off. New couples mostly start life in

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152. TATTOOING (TOGWIN, SEE P. 13)

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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408. CHINESE DICE (NDAUNG).

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ment associated with sot (*ayet-thauk*), next after which is *bèinza* —opium-eater. Women do not often play chess or cards; they have a game called *pasit* (beetle-fight), somewhat resembling back-gammon.

Games of pure hazard are in great favour, especially at festival times. Chinese and Shan settlers start gambling-dens for the dissolute youth, with Chinese dice (*Ndaung, Angalôn*, No. 406), and the thirty-six animal lottery (*tl, thônzè-chaukkaung kazà*), symbols intelligible to every nation and the meanest capacity. For *angalôn* there is a paper or cloth with compartments for six different figures of animals on which money is staked, corresponding to similar figures on a wooden cube, which is shaken in a box.

541 The showmen in Burma are the conjuror and the snake-charmer. The Burman juggler (*myet-hlè sayà*) makes no pretence of occult powers, not even to children. His name implies that his movements "elude the eye;" but his legerdemain does not attain to the art of the Indian and Chinese jugglers. The snake-charmer, on the other hand (*ôlambè sayà*), pretends to be protected by magic. He is tattooed all over with snakes; he has slits at the side of his tongue which he shows, and in other ways he plays upon credulity. It has been alleged that the snake-men inoculate themselves with the venom, but this is not authenticated, though it is known from the experiments of Calmette and Fraser that immunity can be produced in this way. The cobra (*muyè-hauk*) is exhibited, but only when the hamadryad (*nganbôk*), a much larger species of the same family, cannot be procured (p. 96). The snakes are exhibited in their natural

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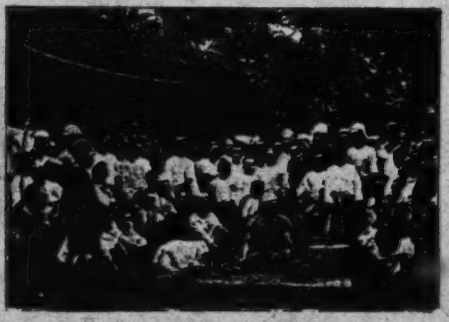

409. BURMAN JUGGLER.